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*The Superiour Excellency of CHARITY,*

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A

**S E R M O N**

Preach'd before the

**SONS of the CLERGY,**

**AT THEIR**

**ANNIVERSARY-MEETING**

**IN THE**

**Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,**

*Thursday, Febr. 19, 1735.*

---

By *PHILIP BARTON*, LL. D.

Canon of *Christ-Church, Oxford*; and Fellow of  
the College near *Winchester*.

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**L O N D O N :**

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T O

<i>The Rev. John Pelling, D.D.</i>	<i>Maurice Green, M.D.</i>
<i>The Rev. W. Hodges, D.D.</i>	<i>Robert Westley, Esq;</i>
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<i>The Rev. Mr. Westley Hall.</i>	<i>William Deyman, Gent.</i>
<i>Sir Francis Boynton, Bart.</i>	<i>John Blackall, Gent:</i>

# STEWARDS

FOR THE

SONS of the CLERGY,

THIS

# DISCOURSE,

Preach'd and Printed at their Request,

Is humbly Inscrib'd,

*By their Faithful,*

AND

*Obedient Servant,*

PHIL. BARTON.

TO  
 The Rev. J. A. F. B. D. D. Maurice Green, M.D.  
 The Rev. W. H. B. D. D. Robert Wesley, B.A.  
 The Rev. C. L. B. D. D. Edmund Gibson, B.A.  
 The Rev. J. B. B. D. D. The B. B. B. B. B.  
 The Rev. W. B. B. D. D. William B. B. B.  
 The Rev. J. B. B. D. D. John B. B. B.

# STEWARDS FOR THE SONS OF THE CLERGY THIS DISCOURSE

Preached and Printed at their Request,  
 Is humbly inscribed,

To their Fatherly  
 AND  
 Obedient Son,

THOMAS BARTON.





I CORINTHIANS xiii. 13.

*And now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity.*

**M**ANY and various were the Diffensions in the Church of *Corinth*; particularly they had been divided by false Teachers, who pretended to Art and Eloquence, and to a great Affectation and Shew of human Learning. — In answer to these Deceivers, *St. Paul* represents to them the Nature and Dignity of the Christian Religion. He assures them that it was a Dispensation immediately revealed from Heaven; that the Person who delivered it, was the true Messiah; that He was *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. He tells them farther, that so divine an Institution had no occasion of being recommended with Pomp and Ceremony, or supported by the usual Arts of Policy and Address; that therefore he had preached to them the plain and naked Truths of the Gospel, without any Ornaments of Language, without any Mixture of human Reasoning and Philosophy.

*And*

*And I, Brethren, when I came to you, came not with the Excellency of Speech, nor with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom; but I was with you in Weakness, and Fear, and much Trembling, that your Faith might not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God.*

HE then proceeds to shew the Danger of Division; he tells them the destructive Consequences that naturally attend it, and how contrary it is to the very Design and Genius of the Christian Institution. — Inflamed at last by his Subject, he breaks out into a very magnificent Description of Charity. *Many excellent things are spoken of this divine Grace; but never was it represented in a more amiable and lovely manner. The Images are strong and lively; the Figures lofty and sublime. Though I speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. Though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains; though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned; yet, if I have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing. — All the Operations of the Spirit of God; all the Manifestations of Power and Wisdom; all the miraculous Graces of the Holy Ghost; all that we can believe in this World, or expect in the next; all is inferiour to Charity. — And now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity.*

IN discoursing upon which Words, I shall beg leave in the *First* place, to enquire into this Declaration of the Text, why it is that Charity is said to be superiour to Faith and Hope.

AND then, *Secondly*, I shall consider the proper Objects of Charity, with a View to the Occasion of this Day's Solemnity.

AND *First*, I am to enquire into this Declaration of the Text, why it is that Charity is said to be superiour to Faith and Hope.

CHARITY then (in the Language of our Blessed Saviour) is *the great Commandment*; or (as it is elsewhere expressed in Scripture) *the fulfilling of the Law*. That is, it is the Completion and Consummation of every Virtue, and contains every Article of Duty, that adorns a Christian.—Faith and Hope are only particular Virtues, they are rather the Motives and Instruments of Religion, than Religion itself. There may be an unactive Faith, without any Signs of Obedience; there may be an ill-grounded Hope, without any Fruits of the Spirit. — But Love is a more awakened and active Principle; it commands the Will, and governs the Affections. It is this divine Grace, which denominates us good Men; it renders us conformable to the Will of Heaven, and fills up the measure of our Duty both to God and Man.

WE are commanded *to love the Lord with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength*.—Now this implies, that we should contemplate and admire his high Perfections; that  
this

this Admiration should not affect our Understandings only, but descend upon our Hearts, and influence our Practice; that the Love of him should know no Bounds, except the absolute Impossibility of rising higher; that every other Enjoyment, which stands in competition with it, should be disdained and neglected; and that God alone should be the supreme, the unrivall'd Object of our Love.—This, this is the Charity intended by the Apostle, and which shews itself in all the happy Effects of universal Benevolence. So that unless we are influenced by this vital Principle within us, we can never advance to any degree of Perfection, we can never arrive *at the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*.—In vain then shall we plead the most enlarged Discoveries of Faith; in vain shall we depend upon the most glorious Prospects of Hope. All our admired Speculations, all our fondest Wishes and Desires, will profit us nothing. Nothing will hereafter avail us, but what is sanctified by Charity; nothing, but what is done in the Spirit of Benevolence, and with a Love to Mankind.

AGAIN, the very Notion of Charity supposes these Virtues to be previously exercised, and is indeed the natural Reward and Consequence of them.—Our Belief in God, our Hope and Dependence upon his promised Mercies, these are proper Helps and Encouragements in our Christian Warfare. But still our Religion is in its infant State, and the Work of our Obedience is quite unfinish'd, 'till we proceed to Love.—'Tis at a distance Faith sees; 'tis after a long Interval of Time, that Hope expects; but Charity has it's imme-



immediate and present Joys ; it is the Comfort of good Men here, and will be the Employment of Saints hereafter. Faith and Hope are Dispositions of Mind, which are begun in the Virtues of this Life ; but they are never compleated, 'till we arrive at the Glories of the next.—The very Blessedness of Heaven itself consists in Love ; and (if we have not Charity) we are not qualified to enjoy the Pleasures of *Abraham's Bosom*.

BUT farther, Charity unites us to God ; it makes us a Part of the divine Image, and gives us the Resemblance of his Supreme Perfections. Faith and Hope are only Virtues of this World, fitted and adapted to human Nature, designed to animate our Endeavours, to lift up our feeble Hands, and to revive our fainting Hearts. They belong entirely to the Necessities of the Creature, and have no Place or Influence in the Mind of the Creator. But *God himself is Love* ; and infinite as He is in all Perfections, yet his favourite Attribute is Mercy.—So that we are to consider Him, as the great Example of Charity, as the Fountain and Foundation of every Blessing. All the Works of Creation and Providence ; all the Miracles of Redemption and Sanctification ; all the Manifestations of his Power and Presence ; all are so many Arguments of his Love, so many Emanations of his Almighty Goodness.—So that if we would endeavour to be like him, we must be kind, affectionate, and benevolent ; *we must be merciful, even as our Father, which is in Heaven, is merciful* :——And the more we abound in this happy Temper and Disposition of Mind, the nearer we approach to Him, who is the most excellent

Being in the Universe, who is not only the Standard of Virtue, but the Perfection of Happiness.

AGAIN, Charity is a more enlarged and extensive Principle; it loves the Interest of Mankind, and makes it it's Business and Delight to promote it.—There is perhaps something confined and narrow in the Mind of Man. Self-Love is a powerful Ingredient in all our Constitutions, and prevails even in the Exercise of Virtue itself.—Faith and Hope are very necessary Qualifications in the Discharge of our Duty; but then there is generally some Reserve, or Prospect of personal Advantage. We believe and hope for ourselves; or perhaps our Cares extend only to our Friends, and Relations, to those who are allied to us by Birth, Education, or Interest.—But Love is a more diffusive and generous Passion; it carries us beyond ourselves, and displays itself in an affectionate Concern for the whole Creation. Charity intimates an unfeigned Love to God, as the greatest and best of Beings; and then to all those Creatures, who are the Work of his Hands, who have his eternal Reason stamp'd upon their Minds, and who bear the Image and Superscription of the same Creator.—So that the Man of Charity and Benevolence is an universal Benefactor, without any Distinction of Persons, without any Limitation of Time or Place.—*The whole World is his Country, and his Neighbour is all Mankind.*

BUT further, as Charity is of larger Extent, so it is likewise of longer Duration.—Faith and Hope are only Virtues of this Life, and must have their Period at the Consummation of all Things;  
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the one being changed into the Evidence of Sight; the other lost in the Transports of Enjoyment.— Again, there will be an End of all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, of all the Prophecies, and Miracles of the Gospel-State. These had their several Uses intended by Providence, but cannot possibly outlast the Moral World. They must expire, when the Mediatorial Office shall cease, and *when Christ shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father.*— But Charity, as the Text expresseth it, *never faileth.* When we arrive at Heaven, it will be then in its proper State, in its most vigorous Exercise, in its most delightful Employment: For Charity is Love; and Love, admitted to the Fruition and Presence of the Godhead, cannot fail to exert it self in the most enflamed and exalted manner. *The High and Holy One, who inhabiteth Eternity,* who is a Being infinitely lovely, and *in whose Pleasure is Life,* He will satisfy all the Desires, and fill up all the Capacities of an immortal Soul.— So that there will be no possibility of setting Bounds to our Love; it will be for ever exerted, enlarged, and improved. The Object of our Affections will be *God Himself*; we shall love Him, and be loved by Him to all Eternity.

SUCH is the superiour Excellency of this Divine Grace, and so true is that Declaration in the Words of the Text, — *And now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, these Three; but the greatest of these is Charity.*

I proceed now in the *second* Place to consider the proper Objects of Charity, with a View to the Occasion of this Day's Solemnity.

THUS far we have explained the Nature and Extent of Charity, and we have proved it superiour to all the Virtues and Graces of the Christian Life. We have taken a View of this sublime Description of *St. Paul*, and it is impossible to recommend it in stronger Terms. 'Tis plain, that the *Love of God* is the Perfection of every Virtue, and therefore cannot fail to produce the *Love of our Neighbour*.—However it may still enlarge our Generosity, if we attend a little, and hearken to the Voice of *Nature, Reason, and Religion*.

THE earliest, the strongest Impressions of *Nature* incline us to Compassion. The first moment we are born, our Misery begins; and therefore Providence has stamped it upon our very Countenance, that it may immediately propagate Pain and Pity to all Spectators.——Accordingly, we are all acquainted with the Language of Distress, and understand the Meaning of its Sighs and Tears.—'Tis what we feel in ourselves, and what we presently acknowledge and confess, when we see it in our Fellow-Creatures. We are excited immediately to desire the Relief of the Miserable, and by a compassionate Instinct to interpose in their Behalf.—If then we cease to be Charitable, if we are unmoved at the Distresses of our Brethren, if we are not affected, when we hear the *Cries of the Oppressed*; we then renounce the very original Principles of our Being, and forget the Practice of a Duty, which is as old as our Misfortunes; the Date of it is indeed as antient as Mankind, and its Obligation as indissoluble as the very Frame of Nature.



IF from *Nature* we proceed to *Reason*, we shall find our Argument abundantly confirmed. If God has been pleased to fill our Hands with the good Things of this Life; *if we possess Lands for which we did not labour; if we dwell in Houses, which we did not build; if we eat the Fruits of Olive-Yards, and Vineyards, which we did not plant;* with how overflowing a Gratitude should we serve the Lord, and pay a willing Tribute to the Relief of our Fellow-Creatures!—We are all of one Family, all descended from the Loins of one Father; we are all admitted into one Baptism, all are Heirs of the same Salvation.—Why then can we imagine so wide a Difference? Why all this Train of Misery, and Distress? Was it only for the Indulgence, and Luxury of a few, was it for *this*, that God has left so many of his Children destitute, and exposed Himself to the Blasphemies and Murmurs of a discontented World?—Not so are the Proceedings of our heavenly Father. Though the Possession be ours, yet still He has reserved a part of the Inheritance, and has deputed the Poor to be his Substitutes, and his Representatives; to be the Objects of our Pity, and to receive the Remains of our Abundance.

IF Riches indeed were Happiness, there might be some Pretence, at least, for a covetous Possession. But Happiness is a secret Thing, and depends upon hidden Causes, upon the Government of ourselves, and the Command of our Passions.—By the outward Estate of Men, we know very little of their present Pain or Pleasure. 'Tis visible, indeed, who has large Possessions, and who has none; but which of these

these is the happier, is still a Question. A little is enough for all the Necessities, nay, for all the innocent Delights of Nature; and when the proper Abatements are deducted, we shall find perhaps, that our very Abundance proves a Burden. — Since then our Riches can neither make, nor secure us happy; since they are only a little Convenience in this World, and are of no Importance or Use in the other; since they were intended to assist us in our Pilgrimage here, but have nothing to do with our better and immortal Part; let us in Justice and Reason restore them to the God who gave them; let the Poor be the Channel, through which they are conveyed; and let them thus return to that Ocean of Beneficence, from whence they flowed.

If after *Nature and Reason*, we take a View of *Religion*, we shall find that Charity makes a part of every System. — Amidst all the Variety of Schemes and Opinions, however disagreeing and divided they are, yet still they concur and conspire in this, in the Relief of the Poor, in the Care of the Distress'd. — The daring Libertine, who despises Revelation, and laughs at positive Institutions, yet has not been able to discredit Charity, or bring Disreputation upon this Virtue. Even to *Him* 'tis amiable and lovely; he reveres, he honours the Good and Beneficent. — But as for the Christian Religion, Love is its peculiar Character, its very Soul, and Principle. The Religion of Jesus in its Doctrines, Precepts, and Practices is really nothing else, but one general, diffusive, universal Charity.

*To do good, and to communicate; to comfort the Afflicted, and vindicate the Oppress'd; to be a Father to the Fatherless, and to plead the Cause of the Widow; to deal out our Bread to the Hungry, and to satisfy the empty Soul; to heal the Sick, and bind up the broken-hearted; pour Oil into their Wounds, and to bear a part in all the Miseries and Misfortunes of our Fellow-Creatures; these are the great Duties of the Gospel, the repeated and express Commands of our Blessed Saviour.*

IF Heaven had pleased, it might abundantly have provided for all its Creatures; but the Wisdom of Providence has ordained it otherwise, and has left us room for the Exercise of this Divine Virtue. Pain, Poverty, and Distress are *like Arrows in the Hand of the Almighty*, and are sent abroad into the World for the wisest Reasons; to teach us the Vicissitude of human Affairs, to raise up our Minds to Heaven, and to wean us from the Enjoyments of a sinful World; to instruct us in all the Duties of Humanity and Benevolence, and to shew us the Necessity of supporting our afflicted Neighbour.

So that there are as many Ways of diffusing our Charity, as there are imaginable Instances of doing Good; for no unhappy Object is unallied, or foreign to our Compassion.—*We are not born for ourselves alone*; and a Man must be but little instructed in the School of Grace, who is not sensible that he ought to have a Concern for *all* the Unfortunate.—— But because our Abilities are confined, and there is no Possibility of answering *every* Demand; therefore some Limitations

tions are necessary, and we are to make a prudent Choice in the Application of our Charity.

WHEN we see a Man in Extremity of Want, when the Necessity is pressing and clamorous, when (as *Job* expresses it) *he is ready to perish, and there is none to help*; then we are to give a generous and speedy Assistance. To deliberate here would be Cruelty, and the very Delay would be the Means of destroying our Brother.—But when the Difficulty and Danger is not so immediate, then we are to be determined by other Considerations. We are to enquire into the Situation and Merits of the Distressed; we are to consider his Station and Character; whether he be of the same Profession or Religion; whether he be allied to us by his Family, his Friends, or his Country. These are Distinctions warranted both by God and Nature; they are agreeable to the Rules of Justice, and to the Commands of the Gospel. *If a Man provide not for his own, (says St. Paul) he is worse than an Infidel.* And again, *As we have Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, and especially unto those who are of the Household of Faith.* Now if Religion in general be an Argument for Charity, if we are to be moved by the Distresses of every Christian; sure it will still more awaken our Compassion, when we hear the Voice of Mourning in the Sanctuary, and when the Misfortunes of our Brethren cry aloud from the Altar.

THE *Objects for which we plead*, have all the Circumstances of Distress, that can be imagined. They are the Poor, the Fatherless, and the Widow;



dow; *the unhappy Widows and Sons of the Prophets.* These are *They* who implore your Assistance, and who present themselves before you in this solemn Assembly.—It is expressly said by *St. Paul*, that *Charity seeketh not her own*; and therefore far be it from us to *behave unseemly*, or to *speak presumptuously*.—But we may with all Humility observe, that we are the *Stewards and Ministers of Christ*; we preach in his Name, and by his Authority; we deliver the same Doctrines which he taught; we administer the same Sacraments which he ordain'd. It is our Duty to *watch over the House of Israel*, to feed and provide for the Lord's Family, to be unwearied in doing Good as He was, nay, and to lay down our Lives for the Flock as he did. So that we may with Reason expect some *Esteem*, some Returns of Reverence and Affection *for our Work's sake*.

OUR Attendance upon the Ministry is full of Labour and Difficulty; and though the Provision of some is more abundant, yet it may with Truth be affirmed, *that the Portion of Levi* is not great among his Brethren.—Perhaps upon one single Life depends the Fate and Fortune of the Family. And whilst the *good Man of the House* is yet *alive*, we may imagine their many Doubts and Fears, their many Cares and Anxieties. But when the Days of Mourning are come, when their only Comfort and Support is gone; then they are naked, distressed, and destitute; exposed to all the Dishonour and Contempt of Poverty.—Like *Jerusalem* in her Captivity, *their Children are desolate, they spread forth their Hands, and there is none to comfort them.*

MANY are the Enemies of our holy Religion, and therefore we cannot hope they will be Friends to us, who are the Guardians of that Religion. But, whilst *we labour in the Lord's Vineyard*, we are content to bear the Reproaches of an injurious World.—One would imagine our Situation should be unenvied; and that this Day's Solemnity should be a melancholy Proof, how little we advance in the Pomp and Splendor of the World, what few Invasions we make upon the Property of our Neighbour. — However, whilst we are distinguished by the ROYAL Favour and Encouragement, which we daily experience; whilst we are supported by the *Great and Good*, who are pleased to pour in their Offerings with a bounteous Hand; but above all, whilst we are under the Care and Protection of *Providence*, that Providence *whose Mercies are new every Morning*, and which by many unforeseen and unexpected Accidents provides for us; I say, whilst we have these Assistances and Encouragements, we go on with Chearfulness in the Discharge of our Duty, and with Gratitude do we acknowledge the Favour both of God and Man.

WE beseech you therefore, Brethren, *not to be weary in well-doing; but to have in Remembrance those who have spoken unto you the Word of God.*——The Majesty of the living God, before whom we stand; the Solemnity of this House of Prayer, where we are now assembled; the holy Offices of Devotion, which we have just perform'd; the *Voice of Melody*, which naturally inspires us with tender Sentiments; the House of Feasting, whither we are going, and where we  
are

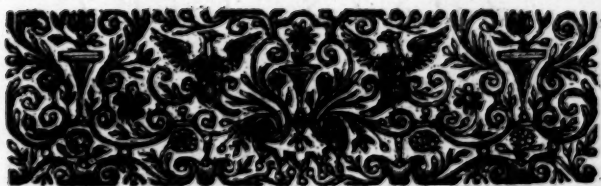
are to enjoy the Blessings of Heaven with Mirth and Innocence; All these are so many Arguments to awaken our Charity, and to make us *feel* the Distresses of our afflicted Brethren.—*Two hundred Penny-worth of Bread is not sufficient, that every one of these may take a little.*——Let us therefore enlarge our Hearts, and open wide our Hands, that the Fatherless, and the Distressed may rejoice with us, and that we *may cause the Widow's Heart to sing for joy.*——And let us remember, that whatever we thus employ, it will be abundantly *returned into our own Bosom.* The Poor with united Voices will offer up their Petitions for us, and their Prayers shall *enter into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*——So that we shall enjoy the Favour of the Almighty in *both* Worlds; the most distinguish'd Blessings of Providence will attend us here, and when we depart hence, we shall *sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Honour, Thanksgiving, and Glory, World without End. *Amen.*



World without End.





## POSTSCRIPT.

TO obviate all Jealousies, that may arise either from the *Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy*, or that of the *Royal Bounty for the Augmentation of small Livings*, it may be proper to observe;

THAT in the *First Case*, their Widows are *Laity*; their Children, who are put out *Apprentices*, are *Laity*; their *Masters* and *Mistresses*, who receive the Money, *Laity*; and what *Clergymen* contribute, which is no small Share, is so much transfer'd from them to the *Laity*. So that here there can be no Danger of their encreasing Power or Wealth at all.

AND it will be Time enough to consider the *Latter Case* some Centuries hence; as will appear by the following *Calculation*, drawn up by an accurate Hand.

“THE Governors of the *Royal Bounty* are now empower'd to augment all *Livings* not exceeding 50*l.* per annum. And the Number of *Livings* following have been certified to be capable of *Augmentation*.

1071	Livings not exceeding 10 <i>l. per annum</i> , may be augmented, with the Bounty only, six times each, pursuant to the present Rules of the Governors, which will amount to 6426 Augmentations.	6426
1467	Livings above 10, and not exceeding 20 <i>l. per annum</i> , may be augmented four times each, which will make 5868 Augmentations.	5868
1126	Livings above 20, and not exceeding 30 <i>l. per annum</i> , may be augmented three times each, which will make 3378 Augmentations.	3378
1049	Livings above 30, and not exceeding 40 <i>l. per annum</i> , may be augmented twice each, which will make 2098 Augmentations.	2098
884	Livings above 40, and not exceeding 50 <i>l. per annum</i> , may be each once augmented, which will make 884 Augmentations.	884
<u>5597</u>	<u>Total Number of Augmentations,</u> which may be made (by the Bounty alone) before the Livings already certified will exceed 50 <i>l. per annum</i> each	<u>18654</u>

## P O S T S C R I P T. 23

THE clear Amount of the *Bounty* is computed (*communibus annis*) to make 55 Augmentations yearly: So that, by the *Bounty alone*, it must be 339 Years, from the Year 1714 (which was the first Year in which any Livings were augmented) before all the small Livings already certified can exceed 50 *l. per annum*.

*Note*, In this Calculation the several Livings *not exceeding 10 l. per annum*, are all computed at 10 *l. per annum*, and so on to 20, 30, 40, 50; which in the course of Augmentations will add considerably to the Number of Years above-mentioned, before the Purpose designed by the *Royal Bounty* can be compleated: And besides, there are many more Livings capable of Augmentation, which have not yet been certified.

*Note*, 18654 Augmentations being to be made by the *Bounty alone*, before the Livings already certified, will amount to above 50 *l. per annum* each; if it be computed that one half of such Augmentations may be made in conjunction with *Benefactors*, it will then require 226 Years before the Livings already certified will exceed 50 *l. per annum*."

F I N I S.

# ARTICLE 17

The first of the two is that the amount of the fund is to be divided into two equal parts, one part to be paid to the fund and the other part to be paid to the fund. The second is that the amount of the fund is to be divided into two equal parts, one part to be paid to the fund and the other part to be paid to the fund.

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